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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses bell hooks' book of 15 short essays, "Teaching To Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom," which gathers hooks's central beliefs about the political purposes of higher education. The paper describes hooks' own lack of models for the kind of classroom she wished to create as a young teacher and her initial experimentation with and student resistance to that which was untraditional. The book explores the specific nature of her engaged (transformatory/liberatory/radical) pedagogy and its particular demands upon instructors and students. It suggests the joys of learning in such a freed environment. Three components of hooks' educational philosophy are (1) education as resistance (teaching and learning as revolutionary acts); (2) engaged pedagogy (which sees classrooms as arenas for exploration and mutual participation and which requires knowledge of individual students, different cultural ways of knowing, and self-actualization); and (3) learning as joy and ecstatic transformation. Weaknesses in hooks' educational philosophy include not specifying important issues (e.g., seldom offering detailed examples of such things as classroom exchanges or curricular choices) and never specifically stating what she feels students who have partaken of engaged pedagogy will be able to do that traditionally trained students cannot. (SM)

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The Teaching Philosophy of bell hooks:

The Classroom As A Site For Passionate Interrogation

Insurgent African American writer and thinker, with broad-ranging educational and cultural interests, bell hooks'[i] book of fifteen short essays, Teaching To Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom[ii] (1994) is her first work focused exclusively on teaching, learning, and what she calls education as the process of liberation.

"Public intellectual" (see Cornel West), frequent writer and lecturer on racism, feminism and the colonial aspects of our culture, hooks describes the shock and disbelief of her audiences when she informed them she was writing a book on teaching. "[T]he academic public that I encounter at my lectures always shows surprise when I speak intimately and deeply about the classroom...This surprise is a sad reminder of the way teaching is seen as a duller, less valuable aspect of the academic profession. ...Yet [this perspective] must be challenged if we are to meet the needs of our students, if we are to restore to education and the classroom excitement about ideas and the will to learn" (pp 11-12). hooks is passionately devoted to teaching, she says simply, and demonstrates this ardor with intensity in this collection of interwoven essays.

A classroom teacher for over twenty-five years (hooks began teaching at twenty-one as an undergraduate), and now Distinguished Professor of English at City College in New York City, instruction of students is not only her daily bread but a primary means of enacting her personal and political beliefs. In the arena of the classroom, within the academy and close to those curricular and cultural forces which "reinscribe systems of colonialism and dominance," hooks positions herself as a passionate objector: as a teacher seeking to free students to their own passionate objection, and as one who invites personal transformation through the ecstasy of learning.

In an essay structured as a public dialog (with her friend and comrade Ron Scapp, a professor of philosophy at Queens college), hooks describes herself as "a genuinely radical critical teacher" (p. 132). A careful analysis of Teaching to Transgress reveals why. The process of becoming educated, for the dissenting hooks, is about learning to develop the tools and frameworks to interrogate all forms of domination and colonization, of freeing the student from the classrooms and systems of thought which have taught the pupil to obey and be passive.

This series of essays loosely gathers together hooks' central beliefs about the political purposes of education, describing her own lack of models for the kind of classrooms she wished to create as a young teacher,[iii] and her initial experimentation with and student resistance to that which was (and is) untraditional in the classroom. ("When we try to change the classroom so that there is a sense of mutual responsibility for learning, students get scared that you are now not the captain

working with them, but that you are after all just another crew member—and not a reliable one at that" p. 144.) She explores the specific nature of her "engaged" (or transformatory, or liberatory or radical) pedagogy and its particular, sometimes unexpected demands upon instructors and students. Ultimately, she suggests the joys of learning in such a freed environment, when the classroom becomes a "location of possibility...a place where paradise can be created." (p. 207). (This ecstasy in learning, it should be noted, also has particular political power. It is an animating and radicalizing force.) Teaching to Transgress is equal parts blueprint for educational practice, explication of an educational philosophy, and personal testament to the power of learning to nurture, animate and heal.

Nurture, healing and animation are not what hooks sees in abundance when she looks out upon the institutions of higher education in which she currently teaches or which she inhabited as an undergraduate. Rather, she describes the powerful emotional dysfunctionalism of the academy, its rigid mind/body dualisms, its profound resistance to experimentation in classroom practice, its self-satisfaction and sense of entitlement. hooks vividly remembers the professors of her undergraduate days who silenced, who turned away from other voices, who used their power to "deny their bodies," (p. 137), spirits and political responsibilities in their teaching and in their scholarship.

Underneath hooks' analysis of, "a corrupt and dying academy" of course, lies a larger implicit purpose. hooks' engaged pedagogy and rejection of coercive hierarchies is not simply about transformation of individual classrooms in higher

education for more real participation and joy, but about the remaking of souls and the re-engergizing of the culture. Because all that supports systems of dominance, paradigms of racism and classism, and mysogengy are life-sapping and debilitating, a primary means of identifying addressing these debilitations and silencings is through interrogative dialog. This interrogative dialog should be taught in the classroom. For hooks, classroom practice is about the reinvention of the world through learning.

The desire to remake, to reimagine, to push beyond boundaries to explore for greater meaning and depth, is an animating force in all of hooks' work, from investigations of visual representations of blacks and African American women in our culture, to feminism, to the joys of writing . Like a circle, each set of hooks' ideas tends to connect to the other, with a final intent which is absolutely clear. "To demand of ourselves and our comrades an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress" (p. 207). [iv]

Close analysis of Teaching to Transgress reveals the structure of hooks' ideas about education as boundary crossing, and explores her lion-hearted manifesto for educational practice.

Three Components of hooks' Educational Philosophy

For hooks, education[v] which is liberating and paradigm-challenging has three primary philosophical components.

1. Education As Resistance: Teaching and Learning As Revolutionary Acts

Growing up in rural Kentucky in the late 1950's and early 60's, hooks looks back with longing upon the black, female teachers of the segregated Booker T. Washington School of her girlhood. With "messianic zeal" these watchful, committed instructors lavished attention upon the academically promising, seeking to transform African American children into "scholars, thinkers and cultural workers—black folks who used [their] minds."

These teachers, profoundly committed to individual children and to knowing their pupils intimately, implicitly understood that their work involved much more than simple mastery of a curriculum. In hooks recollection (if not in these instructors' specifically-articulated intentions) teaching was a quiet form of resistance and moral revolution. hooks observes that what she was being taught by these passionate, challenging instructors was not only the joy of thinking and the necessity of personal engagement for meaningful learning, but also that, "devotion to learning, to a life of the mind, was a counter-hegemonic act, a fundamental way to resist every strategy of white racist colonization" (p. 2). Engaged, interrogative teaching as a central expression of political activism and cultural resistance underlies all hooks' theories about education.

For hooks, education for liberation, as she was taught in her girlhood, foments voice and critical awareness in students. It enables students to begin to question the prevailing paradigms of race, class and patriarchy found abundantly in

schools (and everywhere), and gives students confidence in their authority to engage in such questioning.

Freeing students to interrogate, to resist, to reframe and re-imagine with joy, passion and ecstasy, is the central work of teachers for hooks, and this work has a specific political agenda. Encouraging students to see that they themselves are "subjects in history, [often] member[s] of marginalized and oppressed groups, victimized by institutionalized racism, sexism and class elitism" (p. 142) is what liberatory teachers can and should do. And although few instructors currently are liberatory or transforming, hooks believes that such pedagogical transformations are possible, through the embrace of engaged pedagogy. Ultimately, hooks says, "my commitment to engaged pedagogy is an expression of political activism" (p. 203).

2. Engaged Pedagogy Moral and cultural transformation, a central outgrowth of liberatory education, cannot be achieved however, without dramatic reconfiguration of standard teaching practices in higher education classrooms; the prevailing paradigms of the academy and the professor must be overturned for transformational pedagogy to take root. These traditional frames: that of the instructor as the single, all-knowing and all-approving purveyor of knowledge in his or her class; of the professor as exclusively in control of the classroom and "enthralled by the exercise of power and authority within their mini-kingdom" (p. 17); of the instructor as bodiless, spiritless, and without passion; and of the

instructor as exclusively responsible for the dynamic of the classroom; must be rethought, re-envisioned, and ultimately retired.

hooks acknowledges that the work involved in such re-envisioning is not simple and is not easy. [vi] At Oberlin, where she was an instructor for several years, hooks and another (untenured) professor held a series of talks with instructors to discuss the necessity of changing teaching practice to reflect the realities of greater diversity in the classroom.

She writes that the results of such discussions were alarming and disheartening, indicative of how difficult it was to locate and give expression to the ideas that curriculum choices are not "culture neutral," and that pedagogical practice itself reveals political perspectives. She recalls, "Although we proceeded from the standpoint that the vast majority of Oberlin professors, who are overwhelmingly white, were basically well-meaning, concerned about the quality of education students receive...and therefore likely to be supportive...again and again it was necessary to remind everyone that no education is politically neutral. Emphasizing that a white male professor in an English department who teaches only works by 'great white men' is making a political decision, we had to work consistently against the politics of racism, sexism, hetrosexism, and so forth that inform how and what we teach" (pp. 36-37).

Most of all, hooks observes, engaged pedagogy requires that instructors face their deep-seated fears about loss of control of the classroom. Transformative pedagogy demands that, "the prevailing pedagogical model [which is] authoritarian,

hierarchical in a coercive and often dominating way...and...one where the voice of the professor is the 'privileged transmitter of knowledge," (p. 85) be directly controverted. For a vast majority of instructors, this is frightening. "Many teachers are disturbed by the political implications of a multicultural education because they fear losing control" (p. 35); they are ill-equipped to teach in multi-cultural classrooms. Hooks reports that at Oberlin professors were so dismayed by the analysis that their curriculum choices reflected particular political perspectives that actually moving to focus on "the ways in which teaching and learning [also] reflect biases...particularly white supremacist [ones]" (p. 37) was doubly difficult. In spite of these obstacles, and the personal discomfort felt by individuals involved in this process, hooks is insistent upon the importance of these confrontations and interrogations.

Like these deliberately practical discussions at Oberlin, hooks is not just concerned with reframing education in general political and moral terms, but describes several aspect of engaged pedagogy specifically. This pedagogy has several intertwined elements, fundamentally suggesting a stance between teacher and student which is shifting, adaptive, dialogic, flexible in terms of curriculum plan, and one in which student learns from teacher and teacher also learns from student: [vii]

- Classrooms As Arenas for Exploration and Mutual Participation. Perhaps most centrally, engaged pedagogy requires the active contributions of both teachers and students. Community in classrooms cannot be created

by the instructor alone, hooks suggests, nor can the instructor be exclusively responsible for excitement in the classroom. (hooks says that she initially thought that Teaching to Transgress would be a book for teachers only. After a particularly difficult experience with a resistant class she realized that classroom community was also necessarily also the responsibility of students. "After the class ended, I began writing with the understanding that I was speaking to and with both students and professors" p. 9, she says.)

While a central goal of hooks' transformative pedagogy is to make, "the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute" (p. 39) many students resist this responsibility and are initially unwilling to take charge of their duties. "Since the vast majority of students learn through conservative, traditional educational practices and concern themselves only with the presence of the professor" (p. 8) hooks suggests that she very deliberately attempts to turn students away from her voice and her presence, to listening to each other. (In her case, also, she describes the necessity of instructors resisting dominance because of "star status," because they have become famous and public figures.) "One of the responsibilities of the teacher is to help create an environment where students learn that, in addition to speaking, it is important to listen respectfully" (p. 150) and that each members' contributions are valued.

Many students are initially uncertain that they will really be heard by their classmates or that their contributions, knowledge or experience will be honored. hooks notes, "the experience of professors who educate for critical consciousness indicates that many students, especially students of color, may not feel at all 'safe' in what appears to be a neutral setting. It is the absence of a feeling of safety that often promotes prolonged silence or lack of student engagement" (p. 142).

To create excitement, to engender community, to share responsibility for classroom dynamics, respectful listening and valuing of every member of the class must be demonstrated and modeled by the professor, hooks insists. The instructor must actually *feel* that each student has something important to add to the classroom dialog, and must actively recognize these contributions. In the engaged pedagogical classroom, hooks says, "everyone's presence is acknowledged."

- Engaged Pedagogy Requires Knowledge of Individual Students. Just as the teachers in the segregated classrooms of hooks' girlhood lavished attention upon individual students, learning about their lives, families and interests, instructors in higher education classrooms must also create community through individualized and particular knowledge of students. This means more than simply knowing students' names; true engagement and community cannot be achieved superficially. hooks offers several

specific classroom practices to deepen the experience of knowing between student and instructor: keeping journals which the instructor reads during the course term; the reading aloud of paragraphs about early racial experiences to the entire class; scheduling individual meetings with every student; holding informal lunches with students to learn about their lives and concerns. Radical pedagogues are sensitive to the particularities of students individual learning needs and concerns, and this sensitivity can only be achieved through some real intimacy with students.

Having taught in this way for over twenty-five years, hooks acknowledges the amount of work involved in such transformative pedagogical practice. "Profound commitment to engaged pedagogy is taxing to the spirit. After...years of teaching, I have begun to need some time away from the classroom." (p. 202-3). Additionally, hooks notes, with engaged pedagogical practice one is often quite sought out as an instructor: "Although it is a reward of engaged pedagogy that students seek courses with those of us who have made a whole-hearted commitment to education as the practice of freedom, it is also true that we are often overworked, our classes often overcrowded. ...Over time I've begun to see that departmental pressure on 'popular' professor to accept larger classes was also a way to undermine engaged pedagogy. If classes become so full that is impossible to know students' names, to

spend quality time with each of them, then the effort to build a learning community fails." (pp. 203-4).

- Instructors must learn different cultural ways of knowing. Describing the epistemological revolution required by instructors to teach in a truly multicultural classroom, hooks states, "simply changing [course] content...does not accurately represent progressive visions of the way commitment to cultural diversity can constructively transform the academy" (p. 33). She insists, epistemologically, that embracing new forms of knowing is not about substituting one system of domination for another, but involves learning about and genuinely valuing ways of knowing and understanding which are outside of the traditions of the academic institution. She understands that this too is not easy. "It takes courage to embrace a vision...of being that does not reinforce the capitalist version that suggests that one must always give something up to gain another" (p. 183).

Real acceptance of alternative epistemologies means that community in classrooms is established around *a shared desire to know* among students and teacher, rather than by common identities and backgrounds. ("What we all ideally share [then] is the desire to learn—to receive actively knowledge that enhances our intellectual development and our capacity to live more fully in the world" p. 40.) This is a profound shift.

Instead of commonalties of culture and class, students and teacher are gathered in intellectual inquiry.

This new unity around a shared desire to learn requires exploration on the part of instructors. It demands intense intellectual and social learning. "As I worked to create teaching strategies that would make a space for multicultural learning, I found it necessary to recognize what I have called in other writing on pedagogy different 'cultural codes.' To teach effectively a diverse student body, I have to learn these codes. And so do students. This act alone transforms the classroom. The sharing of ideas and information does not always progress as quickly as it may in more homogeneous setting. Often, professors and students have to learn to accept different ways of knowing, new epistemologies, in the multicultural settings." (p. 41) Engaged pedagogy involves implicit recognition of students on the part of the instructor, and constant reinforcement of the fact that "knowledge is a field in which everyone labors" and no one is excluded. This acknowledgment alone, if it is truly enacted in the classroom, can be transforming to students and instructor.

- Engaged pedagogy requires self actualization. The ability to confront internalized racism, class privilege, and political entitlement in oneself and others requires secure, mature emotional skills and a powerful ability to communicate, all somewhat rare commodities in most academic settings. hooks frequently notes that self-actualized, honest communication and

behavior on the part of the instructors (and students) are discouraged or seen as challenging to authority in most higher education settings, yet to become a transformative teacher requires a "true revolution of values," says hooks, quoting Martin Luther King. As in getting to know students individually, transforming oneself is not work that can be done superficially.

Just as the instructor must confront his or her political, class, sexual and cultural values and biases to engage students, to bear witness to the learning that students and teachers will do together, hooks insists that teachers must also learn to acknowledge the body and spirit in the classroom. Not only must the teacher give up his or her desire to be loved by students (engaged pedagogy involves hard emotional work and long-term payoffs), but instructors must also directly confront the eroticism of learning. Teachers must analyze the "legacy of repression and denial that has been handed down to us by our professorial elders," (p. 191) and grant that passionate attraction and eros have a place in the classroom. They can be powerful enhancements to learning, if understood and responsibly reckoned. "Those of us who have been intimately engaged as students or teachers with feminist thinking have always recognized the legitimacy of a pedagogy that dares to subvert the mind/body split and allows us to be whole in the classroom" (p. 193).

hooks understands, however, that the academy is a place which seeks to deny wholeness, and that recognition of the body and its passions and power in learning are also counter-hegemonic. ("I remember a class that I took from a professor who was a serious alcoholic. He was a tragic figure, who often came late to the classroom and rambled on...it was a horrible experience. We became complicit in his substance abuse each class when we didn't see it...Even those he was stumbling around drunk, giving the same lecture he gave last week, we didn't tell him because we didn't want to disrupt his authority, his image of himself...we were simply complicit" p. 160).

Engaged pedagogy is a radical pedagogy, daring instructors and students to question repression and denial on many levels, to become whole in feelings, actions, intellect and voice in ways generally unapproved by the scholar, for the scholar. For hooks, however, the reasons for such daring are undeniable, unquestionable. Teaching is sacred work, and, at its most powerful, moves souls. To be engaged in such powerful work is joyful and personally transforming. At her best, hooks happily describes, "It has been as a teacher in the classroom setting that I have witnessed the power of a transformative pedagogy rooted in a respect for multiculturalism. Working with a critical pedagogy based on my understanding of Freire's teaching, I enter the classroom with the assumption that we must build 'community' in order to create a climate

of openness and intellectual rigor" (p. 40). Only then, hooks says, can teachers give students "the education they deserve and desire" (p. 44).

3. Learning As Joy and Ecstatic Transformation

Most unusually, hooks writes rapturously of the joys of learning when one is engaged in liberatory education. Looking back on her own childhood as a questioning, highly energetic, objecting young girl who was told by her own mother occasionally that she should go back to where she came from because she was so difficult, hooks writes of the ways in which theory and learning helped her gain critical perspective on her situation. They healed her and helped her grow. Critical thinking, leavened with personal experience (she describes personal experience as the "flour" that makes bread) as joyful and personally powerful, in the context of a generally anti-intellectual culture, is one of hooks' most unusual contributions to the educational dialog, and her expressions of ecstasy in learning are equally unparalleled.

"Learning is a place where paradise can be created," (p. 207) hooks observes, and the enrapturing power of knowing and thinking sing throughout her work. So powerful and pleasurable is learning and thinking, she tells us, that they actually can block extreme physical pain. She describes severely fracturing her wrist one day in an artist's colony in Maine , where she had come to critique students' work. However, as she conversed with artists about their work they, "talked so

intensely about ideas with the two students who were rushing me to the hospital that I forgot my pain. It is this passion for ideas, for critical thinking and dialogical exchange that I want to celebrate in the classroom, to share with students." (p. 204).

Beginning with her notion that classrooms should be exciting, never boring places, hooks plumbs deeply her own transformations around learning and the rich and profound experience of witnessing students transform themselves. These changes, counter-hegemonic as they are, require courage and strength of conviction in instructors. Early on in her teaching career, hooks recalls, "during the years that I taught...at Yale...I witnessed the way education for critical consciousness can fundamentally alter our perceptions of reality and our actions. During one course we collectively explored in fiction the power of internalized racism...interrogating our experiences. [O]ne black female student who had always straightened her hair...came to class after a break and told everyone that this class had deeply affected her, so much so that when she went to get her usual 'perm' some force within her said no. I still remember the fear I felt when she testified that the class had changed her." Bearing witness to her own uncertainty about transforming a student, "some small part of me still wanted...to remain a disembodied spirit" (p. 196). Through critical theory, through experience of her own pleasure in learning and her commitment to political change within the academy, she courageously overcomes this.

Engaged pedagogy--teaching for liberation--is not easy work. [viii] Conflicting with the norms of the academy on a vast array of intellectual, social and emotional levels, hooks dares to step from behind the lectern, to reveal mind body and spirit.

One senses that she had no choice. "To heal the splitting of mind and body, we marginalized and oppressed people attempt to recover ourselves" (p. 175). To recover herself, to remain whole, hooks has developed an educational philosophy which seeks not only to transform the culture, one individual and one classroom at a time, but contradicts the paradigm of the academy that "there is no dignity in the experience of passion, that to feel deeply to be inferior" (p. 175). Hooks' ecstatic experience of learning, her belief in the possibility of joy in the classroom, her commitment to "radical openness" are personal inspirations to all who feel that "the classroom, with all its limitations" remains a location of greatest possibility. In education, hooks dares us to imagine the farther boundaries of the possible.

Areas of Weakness in hooks' Educational Philosophy

A somewhat repetitive, non-linear thinker, hooks' educational philosophy suffers from a few (in my view) forgivable weaknesses common the passionate cultural critic and non-classically-trained philosopher.

Like many social progressivists, hooks' work occasionally suffers from a sense of the unspecified. (She seldom offers detailed examples of classroom exchanges, for instance, or curricular choices.) She additionally indulges in a longing for an

undisclosed time in the past, a time when it is implied that education was more liberatory than it appears to be today. In a statement of such prelapsarian loss, when assessing the role of the traditional university in the maintenance and support of white supremacy, imperialism, sexism and racism, hooks writes that "it is painfully clear that [these] biases [have] distorted education so that is no longer about the practice of freedom" (p. 29). It is unclear, however, and never specifically stated, at what time education *was* about the practice of freedom, except perhaps in remembrance in hooks own segregated classrooms in the south in her girlhood. (And one wonders if all children in these classrooms, even those less apparently academically promising, felt as special and celebrated as hooks.) Expressions of longing for a lost time are common rhetorically[ix] among cultural critics, of course, but if uncorrected reveal an intellectual sloppiness and a fundamental misconception of educations' purpose which is somewhat troubling to the watchful reader.

Additionally, as the essays and public dialogs in Teaching To Transgress overlap and interweave, hooks never specifically states what she feels students who have partaken of engaged pedagogy will be able to do that the traditionally-trained student cannot. While the reader infers that the transformation of culture and of individual values lie at the center,[x] hooks works might be stronger and more pointed if she formulated more direct statements about what she would like liberatory education to do. (Again, one senses that she is sufficiently occupied at present simply describing the outlines of radical pedagogy, its "stance," to expound further.) To specifically explicate the larger social and political purposes of her

consciousness-raising around curriculum and pedagogy may currently be beyond her agenda, or contrary to her commitment to radical openness and flexibility, but would make her work more focused.

Finally, one senses that hooks is a passionate, rapid writer, capturing her thoughts on paper and quickly moving onto the next project. (She reports that whenever she has finished a book or article she feels a sense of loss and uncertainty. These feelings perhaps propel her into the next project. She is currently the author of sixteen books.) Yet her thoughts on radical pedagogy, and their potential effect on practice in higher education classrooms are so powerful and so profound that a slightly more deliberative, structured explication of them would be helpful to readers, especially those who find her ideas foreign, threatening or brand new. Carefully fitting the garment of her educational philosophy, seam for seam and sleeves close to armholes, would make the wardrobe of her work even more craft-revealing and challenging.

The above notwithstanding, for many uncomfortable with the traditional paradigms of the academy, hooks' passionate, boundary-transgressing thinking is profoundly important. As a teacher, healer, and nurturer of spiritual and intellectual belief in students and in herself, hooks relocates the reader in the classroom, making us alive to its huge range of possibilities. In them we may find the power to dismantle systems of domination and discrimination which disfigure American life and stunt individual experience.

Endnotes

i. Born as Gloria Watkins. bell hooks is the name of hooks' great-grandmother. She writes under her great grandmother's name, "to pay homage to the unheard voice of black women of past and present."

[ii] All citations in this paper are to: hooks, bell (1994). Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom (New York: Routledge)

[iii] "Aware of myself as a subject in history, a member of a marginalized and oppressed group, victimized by institutionalized racism, sexism and class elitism, I had tremendous fear that I would teach in a manner that would reinforce those hierarchies. Yet I had absolutely no model, no example of what it would mean to enter a classroom and teach in a different way. The urge to experiment with pedagogical practices may not be welcomed by students who often expect us to teach in the manner they are accustomed to. My point is that it takes a fierce commitment, a will to struggle to let our work as teachers reflect progressive pedagogies" (pp. 142-43).

[v] Although hooks writes exclusively in these essays about the ways in which higher education classrooms should be transformed epistemologically and pedagogically, I assume her ideas apply to all education in general. She regards her grade-school classrooms of her girlhood, for instance, as liberatory and joyful, suggesting that more elementary schoolrooms should and could free themselves from the intellectual and cultural concepts which bind them.

[vi] She notes that something that made this easier for her was that she never consciously wanted to be an academic. "I never had a fantasy of myself as a professor already worked out in my imagination before I entered the classroom. I think that's been meaningful, because it's freed me up to feel that the professor is something I become as opposed to a kind of identity that's already structured and that I carry with me into the classroom" (p. 133).

[vii] I find this quote particularly moving: "In classrooms that have been extremely diverse, where I have endeavored to teach material about exploited groups who are not black, I have suggested that if I bring to the class only analytical ways of knowing and someone else bring personal experience, I welcome that knowledge because it will enhance our learning. Also, I share with the class my conviction that if my knowledge is limited, and if someone else brings a combination of facts and experience, then I humble myself and respectfully learn from those who bring this great gift. I can do this without negating the position of authority professors have, since fundamentally I believe that combining the analytical and experiential is a richer way of knowing." (p. 89)

[viii] Throughout Teaching to Transgress hooks acknowledges her debt to educational theorist Paulo Freire, without whom she feels she might have lost her way at several points early in the development of her theories of education.

[ix] I am particularly fond of David Cohen's classic (1976) article on this topic: "Loss As a Theme in Social Policy," *Harvard Education Review*, Vol. 46 :554.

[x] Some of her students at City College report, for instance: "'You've taught us how to think critically, to challenge and to confront, and you've encouraged us to have a voice. But how can we go to other classrooms?'...This is the tragedy of education that it does not promote freedom." (p. 149).

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